

NFB

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Marc Maurer, President

The Honorable Robert Ney
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3518

December 11, 2001

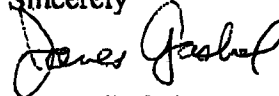
Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express the support of the National Federation of the Blind for the Help America Vote Act of 2001 (H.R. 3295), including language we requested to address the needs of people who are blind. Thanks to your efforts and understanding, this legislation points the way for blind people to vote privately and independently.

While the 2000 election demonstrated significant problems with our electoral system, consensus regarding the solution has been much more difficult to find. Nonetheless, it is clear that installation of up-to-date technology will occur throughout the United States. This means that voting technology will change, and devices purchased now will set the pattern for decades to come. Therefore, requirements for nonvisual access must be an essential component of the new design.

With more than 50,000 members, representing every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, the NFB is the largest organization of blind people in the United States. As such we know about blindness from our own experience. The right to vote and cast a truly secret ballot is one of our highest priorities, and modern technology can now support this goal. For that reason, we support any legislation that will accomplish this objective. Thank you for your assistance in addressing this concern as part of the Help America Vote Act of 2001.

Sincerely



James Gashel
Director of Governmental Affairs
National Federation of the Blind